



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Administrative Office Building, located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte NC on March 8, 2016 at 6 p.m.

PRC MINUTES March 8, 2016

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present:

Elaine Powell, Chair
 Kendel Bryant, Vice Chair
 Mary Foxx Johnson
 Doug Burnett
 John Leonard
 Ed Barnhart
 Aubin Guinness
 Abe Early
 Heidi Pruess
 Brian Cox
 Sterling Martin, Jr.
 Tony Arreaza
 Jim Garges
 Michael Kirschman

PRC Absent:

Tristan McMannis, Secretary

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Powell welcomed all to the March, 2016 PRC meeting and extended a special welcome to Maureen. Maureen was in attendance as an interested future PRC applicant.

PRESENTATIONS:

2015 Mecklenburg County: Community Pulse: **Monica Allen**, Director of Strategic Planning and Evaluation, shared the presentation recently presented at the annual BOCC retreat. The presentation's main focus was on what in Mecklenburg County affects the business of the County. Topics covered included: demographics, senior population, migration trends, education, poverty, homelessness, economy, health and the environment. The end result of the study and presentation showed that Mecklenburg County is:

- Fast growing
- Becoming more diverse
- Stronger economically
- Becoming more healthy
- Dramatically reducing solid waste generation and disposal

(NOTE: This presentation is contained in the PRC Minutes Binder, March 8, 2016, item **4a**, and is housed in the Director's office. The entire PowerPoint can be viewed here: [2015 Mecklenburg County Community Pulse](#) .)

"Are We Ready for Peak Season" – Program Presentation from Park Operations:

Michael Campbell, Central Region Park Manager, shared a presentation on what it takes for the Park Operations Division to be ready for peak season at Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation. His presentation shared the challenges of being ready for the influx of patrons on the park system as they begin their participation in one of many opportunities offered by the Department from a simple picnic in the park to full sport tournaments. (NOTE: This presentation is contained in the PRC Minutes Binder, March 8, 2016, item **4b** housed in the Directors office. The entire PowerPoint can be viewed here: [Are We Ready for Peak Season](#).)

Chair Powell and Director Garges both recognized Michael Campbell and his team for their outstanding work and passion for serving the Department and the citizens of Mecklenburg County, noting that Central Region bears the lion's share of public use and special events.

FY2017 Proposed Fees and Charges:

Mario Chang, Sr. Fiscal Administrator, prior to the regular meeting of the PRC, met with the PRC Fees and Charges Sub-Committee to review and discuss the proposed changes to the Fees and Charges. He then came before the full board to ask for their endorsement. Discussion followed and questions were addressed with the main concern being that going forward, the Fees and Charges Sub-Committee would like to be brought in on the process much earlier, have more input and be allowed more time to absorb the proposed changes. Staff agreed to this request. (NOTE: This presentation and the corresponding spreadsheet is contained in the PRC Minutes Binder, March 8, 2016, item **4c**, housed in the Director's office. The entire PowerPoint and spreadsheet can be viewed here: [FY2017 Proposed Fees and Charges](#) and the [Fees and Charges Spreadsheet](#) .)

Motion was made by Commissioner Bryant to endorse the proposed FY 17 Fees and Charges as presented, which was seconded by Commissioner Martin and approved unanimously.

Synthetic Turf Fields – Crumb Rubber Federal Investigation

As a result of the announcement from the Federal Government to investigate the potential health risk from crumb rubber artificial turf, Director Garges recently made a presentation before the Executive Team to inform them of the current use of these types of fields in Mecklenburg County, alternative field options and to share the decision by the Department on how to address this concern moving forward; basically to recommend that the Department delay installing new crumb rubber in-fill synthetic fields until Federal research is complete or recommend the installation of GeoFill/Organic Fill turf. Director Garges shared this presentation with the PRC. Discussion and questions resulted in the following:

- There was concern that this issue was not brought before the Athletics Advisory Council for weigh-in on the recommendation by the Department that went before the Executive Team. Director Garges responded that as the Director, he was responsible for making the decision, which was critically pressing with a field at Davie Park set for renovation and 4 fields at the Mecklenburg County Sportsplex at Matthews scheduled for installation. Jim said he would attend the next Athletic Advisory Council meeting to provide an update.
- Additional cost per synthetic field of \$ 325,000 for GeoFill/Organic Fill turf.
- Additional cost for GeoFill infill replacement every 2 – 3 years will be absorbed from field fees, however there has been no discussion to increase fees in order to cover any additional impending cost associated with the maintenance of GeoFill.
- Environment impact from crumb rubber field run-off would occur only if the field were in a flood plain.
- Crumb rubber is not used on playgrounds.
- The Department's decision is supported by the Health Department.

Motion was made by Commissioner Cox to endorse the decision of the Department to use the GeoFill organic product for infill on the four remaining fields at the Mecklenburg County Sportsplex at Matthews and Davie Park, which was second by Commissioner Barnhart and approved unanimously.

(NOTE: This presentation is contained in the PRC Minutes Binder, March 8, 2016, item **4d**, housed in the Directors office. The entire PowerPoint can be viewed here: [Synthetic Turf Fields](#) and the utube video can be viewed here: https://youtu.be/_uQezVNLt8

Appointments – Advisory Councils –Applicants

Aquatics: **Motion was made** by Commissioner Cox, to appoint **Lincoln Baxter** to an unexpired term on the Aquatics Advisory Council, expiring 6/2016, which was seconded by Commissioner Leonard and approved unanimously.

Stewardship: **Motion was made** by Chair Powell, to appoint **Nancy Conrad** to an unexpired term on the Stewardship Advisory Council, expiring 6/2017, which was seconded by Commissioner Bryant and approved unanimously.

Director's Report

Director Jim Garges reported on the following:

Open Streets: Partners for Parks received a grant from the Foundation for the Carolinas, which will be used to support an Open Street event each year over the next three years. An open street event temporarily closes a stretch of streets to traffic so that people may use them for walking, bicycling, dancing, playing and socializing. The first Charlotte event will be Sunday, May 1, 2016 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. running from the NoDa area to Memorial Stadium.

Eastway Park: Director Garges prefaced an update on the Eastway Park issue with a short recap on the 2008 bond issue. Projects in the bond were determined through a process which took into account geography, fairness, and addressing the needs from as many of the recreational buckets as

possible from the Master Plan. These are the projects (FY15 -18) the Department has been working on since coming out of the recession. Projects are soon to be ranked for FY18 – 21.

Over the past several months, the neighborhood associations surrounding Eastway Park have met with Commissioner George Dunlap and Park and Recreation staff to push for the second phase of Eastway Park. While these meetings and discussions have led to providing the residents around Eastway Park and the BOCC with a better understanding of the prioritization process and the history of the Eastway Park project, the residents continue to push for the second phase of Eastway, a \$40 million dollar Regional Recreation Center. Commissioner Dunlap plans to seek support to get the second phase of Eastway Park onto the FY17 Capital Project list and has asked the Department to make a presentation at the March 16 BOCC meeting to explain the prioritization process. (NOTE: Since this meeting, the presentation was made at the March 16 BOCC meeting and can be viewed here: [Park and Recreation Prioritization Process](#) also the questions asked by Commissioner Dunlap and the responses from Park and Recreation staff can be viewed here: [Commissioner Dunlap Topic of Interest](#) .)

Director Garges went on to explain that the second phase of the Eastway Park was not included in the bond issue because the first phase was under construction at the time. Currently there are 22 other projects throughout the County that are also waiting for a second phase. While new projects can be moved into the queue, such as the Waymer Center and the Queens Tennis project, for example, the main concern with adding the Eastway Regional Recreation Center as an FY17 Capital Improvement Project is the possibility that it could come at the expense of the same type of project for a Regional Recreation Center in the North (included in the 2008 bond package through the diligence of the Northern town managers).

Much discussion followed among the Commissioners regarding the bond projects, prioritization, funding, how new projects make into the mix, the County's fund balance, advocating to the BOCC and the recommendation the PRC would like to make to the BOCC as a result of the Eastway Park issue.

A motion was made by Commissioner Barnhart for the PRC to endorse the capital project prioritization process and support Park and Recreation projects as determined by the Department, which was seconded by Commissioner Burnett.

Discussion followed after which **an amended motion was made** by Commissioner Pruess for the PRC to endorse the original priority list of projects in the 2008 bond package and recommends adhering to that list prior to adding any additional publicly funded projects.

Following discussion, **the original motion was amended** by Commissioner Barnhart to read: The Park and Recreation Commission endorses the capital prioritization process as determined by the Park and Recreation Department, which was seconded by Commissioner Pruess and approved 11 – 1 with Commissioners Martin, Guinness, Arreaza, Leonard, Bryant, Powell, Barnhart, Pruess, Early, Burnett and Johnson voting in favor of the motion and Commissioner Cox voting against the motion.

PRC Chair Report

Partners for Parks PRC Liaison: Commissioner Pruess volunteered and was appointed to serve as the liaison for the Park and Recreation Commission on the Partners for Parks Board.

PRC BOCC Assignments: These assignments were discussed and Chair Powell completed them on March 9. Assignments are as follows:

- Jim Puckett
 - Aubin Guinness
 - Sterling Martin
- Vilma Leake
 - Mary Johnson
 - Doug Burnett
- Matthew Ridenhour
 - Ed Barnhart
 - Brian Cox
- Bill James
 - Tristan McMannis
 - Brian Cox
- Ella Scarborough
 - Mary Johnson
- Pat Cotham
 - Heidi Pruess
 - Tony Arreaza
- Trevor Fuller
 - Elaine Powell
- George Dunlap
 - Kendel Bryant
- Dumont Clarke
 - Brian Cox
 - John Leonard

PRC Retreat Recap and Action Plan Worksheets: Chair Powell provided each Commissioner with the documents from the PRC retreat for advance review before the evening's meeting. Those documents were included in the PRC agenda packet as items [9a1](#), [9a2](#) and [9a3](#). In addition the packet included, and copies were provided at the seat of each Commissioner, Action Plan Worksheets ([9a4](#)) addressing the themes of *Communication, Knowledge/Experience and Scope/Prioritization*. The purpose was for the PRC to individually identify key actions and behaviors that could be taken to close the gap between the current situation and the desired outcome. It was decided, based on the time required to complete the assignment, to collectively address the theme of communication and schedule a separate meeting for the PRC to complete the assignment.

Consent Items

Consent Items: **Motion was made** by Commissioner Cox to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of January 12, 2016, which was seconded by Commissioner Pruess and approved unanimously.

PRC Reports and Requests

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.